

CITY COUNCIL BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT



Meeting Date: March 11, 2004

Subject **Citizen Budget Forum Public Input**

Background In the fall of 2003, the Scottsdale City Council established the City Council Budget Subcommittee for the purpose of gathering public input regarding the Scottsdale city budget and making recommendations to the full City Council on the budget. The FY 2004/05 Budget Subcommittee members are Councilman Bob Littlefield, Chair; Vice Mayor Wayne Ecton; and Councilman David Ortega. It was determined at the Subcommittee's meetings in January 2004, that public outreach efforts would include three Citizen Budget Forums held at locations spread throughout the City. This report is a summary of those meetings.

Summary **Outreach Methods** - Multiple outreach methods were used to notify citizens as to the dates, times, locations and content of the forums. The methods used were:

- Press releases were sent to newspapers resulting in several news briefs.
- Postcards were sent out inviting interested community and neighborhood leaders and residents to attend the forums.
- Postcard and e-mail invitations were sent to the neighborhood notification list and to participants in the *Roadmap to the Future* strategic action planning sessions that were held in October 2003.
- Personal telephone calls were made to neighborhood leaders and citizens that attended the *Roadmap to the Future* sessions inviting them to a Forum.
- Links were added the City's Internet home page, and web pages were created with additional information about the forum. An e-mail address to submit comments was created for citizens unable to attend a forum.

The forum locations were geographically dispersed throughout the community to make it easier for residents to attend closer to their homes.

Forum Format - Each forum included a welcome by the Chair, overview by the Budget Director and a description of service area programs by a key staff member. Citizen Budget Forum participants were asked to respond to these questions:

- 1) For your service area, indicate your three highest-priority programs.
- 2) For your service area, indicate your three lowest priority programs.
- 3) In difficult economic times would you prefer the City respond by: (a) reducing the budget and related services, (b) looking for more revenue or (c) both.
- 4) If looking for more revenue is your response to addressing community needs and priorities, where do you think the money should come from (i.e., sales tax, property tax, user fees, service charges, etc.)?
- 5) Do you have any cost reduction ideas for any programs or services offered by the City?

The specific dates, locations, and number of participants are provided below:

Date	Location	# of Participants
February 4	La Mirada Center	17
February 12	Community Design Studio	20
February 18	Via Linda Senior Center	18
Subtotal		55
February 26 (Spanish-Language Outreach - LINKS/Conexiones Community Celebration)	Paiute Park	45
E-mails (as of Mar. 8 th)		12
Total		112

Participant Priorities – Each participant completed a worksheet ranking their highest and lowest priorities. The following table summarizes priorities identified by participants during the three Citizen Budget Forums (Questions #1 and #2)

City Planning & Code Enforcement Services	
High Priorities	Low Priorities
1. Code Enforcement	1. Preservation
2. Preservation	2. Inspection & Land Survey
3. Downtown Group	3. (tie) Hospitality Development
	3. (tie) Econ. Vitality Admin.
	3. (tie) CNR – Information Resources
Leisure, Cultural & Human Services	
High Priorities	Low Priorities
1. Youth Activities	1. Professional Baseball
2. (tie) Grounds & Landscape Maintenance	2. (tie) Medians & Right-of-way
2. (tie) Main Library	2. (tie) Trails & Equestrian Facilities
3. (tie) Senior Citizen Services	3. Aquatics
3. (tie) Parks, Recreation & Facilities Planning	
Public Safety Services	
High Priorities	Low Priorities
1. Patrol Services	1. False Alarm Reduction Program
2. Traffic Enforcement	2. Event Traffic Control
3 (tie) Burglary & Theft Investigations	3. Mounted Patrol
3. (tie) Violent Crimes Investigations	
Transportation & Utility Services	
High Priorities	Low Priorities
1. Transportation Planning	1. (tie) Street Cleaning
2. Traffic Engineering	1. (tie) Household Hazardous Waste
3. Transit	1. (tie) WestWorld Golf & Recharge

In addition to questions about city services, participants were also asked a series of questions relating to the City's budget and financial policies. In response to Question #3, "In difficult economic times would you prefer the City respond by..." Participants responded in the following ways.

1. (63%) Reducing the budget and related services AND Looking for more revenue
2. (24%) Looking for more revenue
3. (14%) Reducing the budget and related services

Participants who felt the City "respond by looking for more revenue" preferred the following sources in response to Question #4. "Where do you think the money should come from?" (In order of number of responses)

1. User fees (42 responses)
2. Service charges (34)
3. Property taxes (23)
4. Other sources (19)
5. Sales taxes (18)

Spanish-Language Outreach - In addition to the three forums, staff also listened to priorities from the Spanish-speaking community during a community celebration at Paiute Park held on February 26, 2004. Participants were asked to review a list of twenty-four City services and share which services are most and least important. 45 residents participated in this survey (Attachment #6).

Spanish-Language Outreach Results	
High Priorities	Low Priorities
1. Services to youth	1. Land use, Planning & Zoning
2. (tie) Drinking water	2. Yard Waste Collection
2. (tie) Police	3. (tie) Economic Development
2. (tie) Traffic Enforcement	3. (tie) Traffic Signal Timing

Participant Comments - Comments from each of the Citizen Budget Forums, the Spanish-Language Outreach, and e-mails received at Budget@ScottsdaleAZ.gov are attached (Attachments #1-5). Please note: comments were included verbatim, in their entirety, to preserve the integrity of the process.

Next Steps

The next steps in the City Council Budget Subcommittee's process are:

Study Sessions - The Budget Subcommittee will hold Study Sessions with each of the department heads to review their proposed FY 2004/05 operating and capital budgets. These sessions are scheduled for March 23, 26 and April 2, 2004, beginning at 9 a.m. The sessions are intended to assess how well each department's proposed budget aligns with citizen input, priorities, and the City's Mission and Goals established by the City Council. Also, the Budget Subcommittee will review the City's proposed multi-year Financial Plan, including an examination of the revenue forecast and related assumptions.

Report to City Council - The results of the Budget Subcommittee's work are scheduled for presentation to the full City Council on Monday, May 3 during a public meeting. The report will be presented before the City Council's first public budget hearing scheduled for Tuesday, May 4. (Attachment 7)

All sessions are open to the public.

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Attachments

1. Comments from Feb. 4, 2004 Forum at La Mirada Desert Center
2. Comments from Feb. 12, 2004 Forum at Community Design Studio
3. Comments from Feb. 18, 2004 Forum at Via Linda Senior Center
4. Comments from Feb. 26, 2004 Spanish-Language Outreach at Paiute Park
5. E-mails received at Budget@ScottsdaleAZ.gov
6. Spanish Language Survey
7. Chronological Listing of Forums, Meetings and Study Sessions